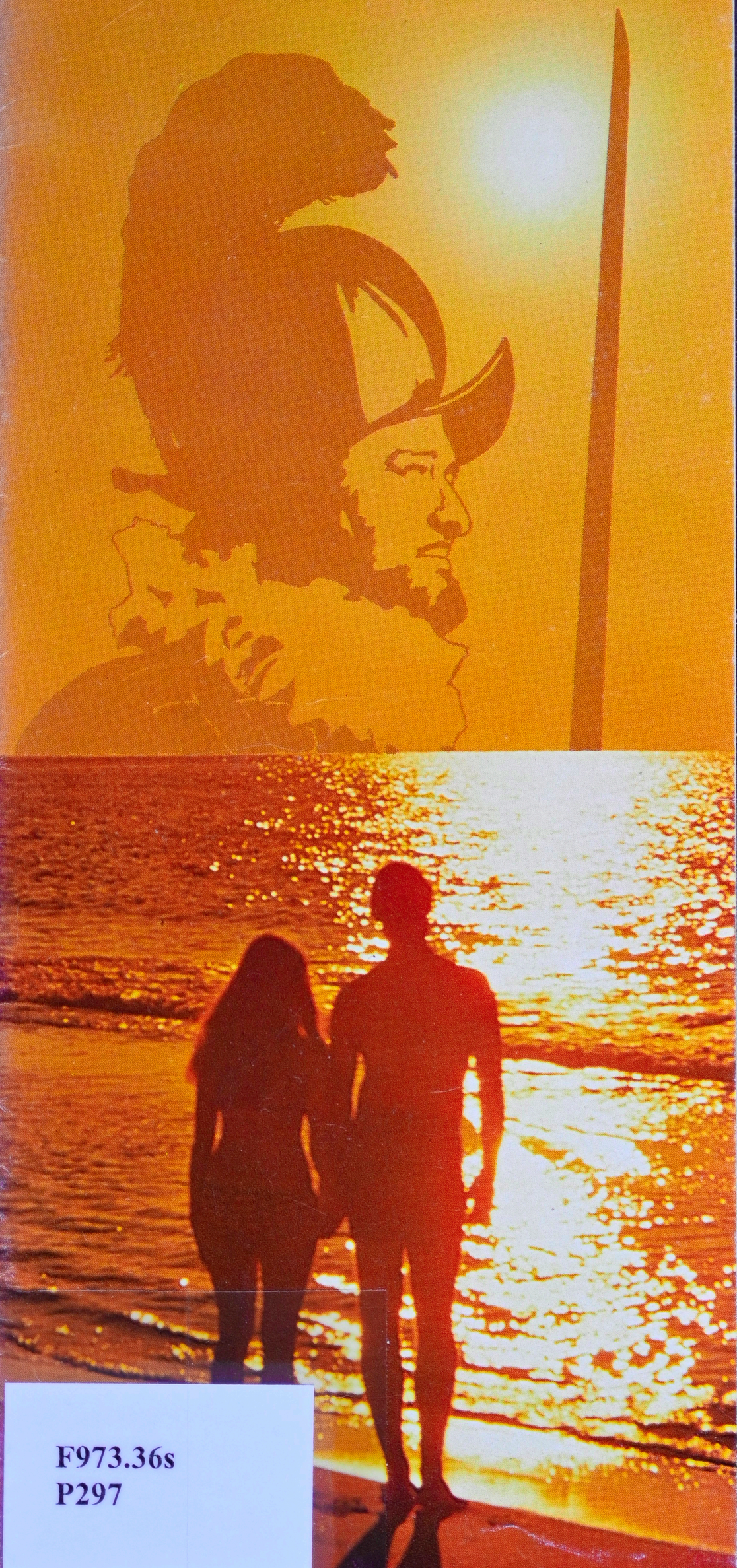
Pathway to the Past



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Florida Celebrates

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STATE LIBRARY OF FLORIDA

When the fife and drums heralded American independence in 1776, Florida already had marked its 200th anniversary.

In fact, the nation's first permanent settlement was established more than 200 years before the Declaration of Independence with the founding of St. Augustine in 1565.

The earliest known discoverer of the peninsula, Juan Ponce de Leon, christened the lush land Pasqua Florida (Feast of Flowers) in honor of his Easter season discovery in 1513.

Following Ponce, a succession of Spaniards seeking fame and fortune continued to explore and settle the new land. Spain's great colonial competitor, Great Britain, also began to extend its influence southward and, in 1763, gained title to Florida.

Great Britain divided its southernmost colony into East and West Florida. The two territories looked on as their northern neighbors grew restless under colonial rule, revolted and won their independence. Had Great Britain treated its Florida subjects as it did those in the north, the young United States might have been known as the "Fifteen Original Colonies." But Florida settlers did not experience the harsh measures imposed elsewhere and remained content British subjects, loyal to the crown.

Although East and West Florida did not participate directly in the American Revolution, Great Britain lost both as a result of the war. The territory reverted to Spain. American interest in the strategically situated Spanish colony intensified as the new nation consolidated its strength. In 1821, the United States annexed Florida.

Today, Florida offers visitors more than 400 years of history encompassing two bicentennial eras.

The state's celebration begins on its Bicentennial Trail, 52 historical and archaeological sites reaching from Pensacola, on the Alabama border, to Key West, the southernmost point of the continental United States.

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Always noted as vacation highlights, the sites assume special appeal in this Bicentennial year. Travelers will find Florida a fascinating state to incorporate into vacation plans, for it is steeped in the heritage of colonial and national history.

Long recognized as the most popular vacation spot in the nation, Florida earns its reputation from warm weather and subtropical scenery, and maintains it with a friendly welcome and a brand of hospitality that never goes out of style.

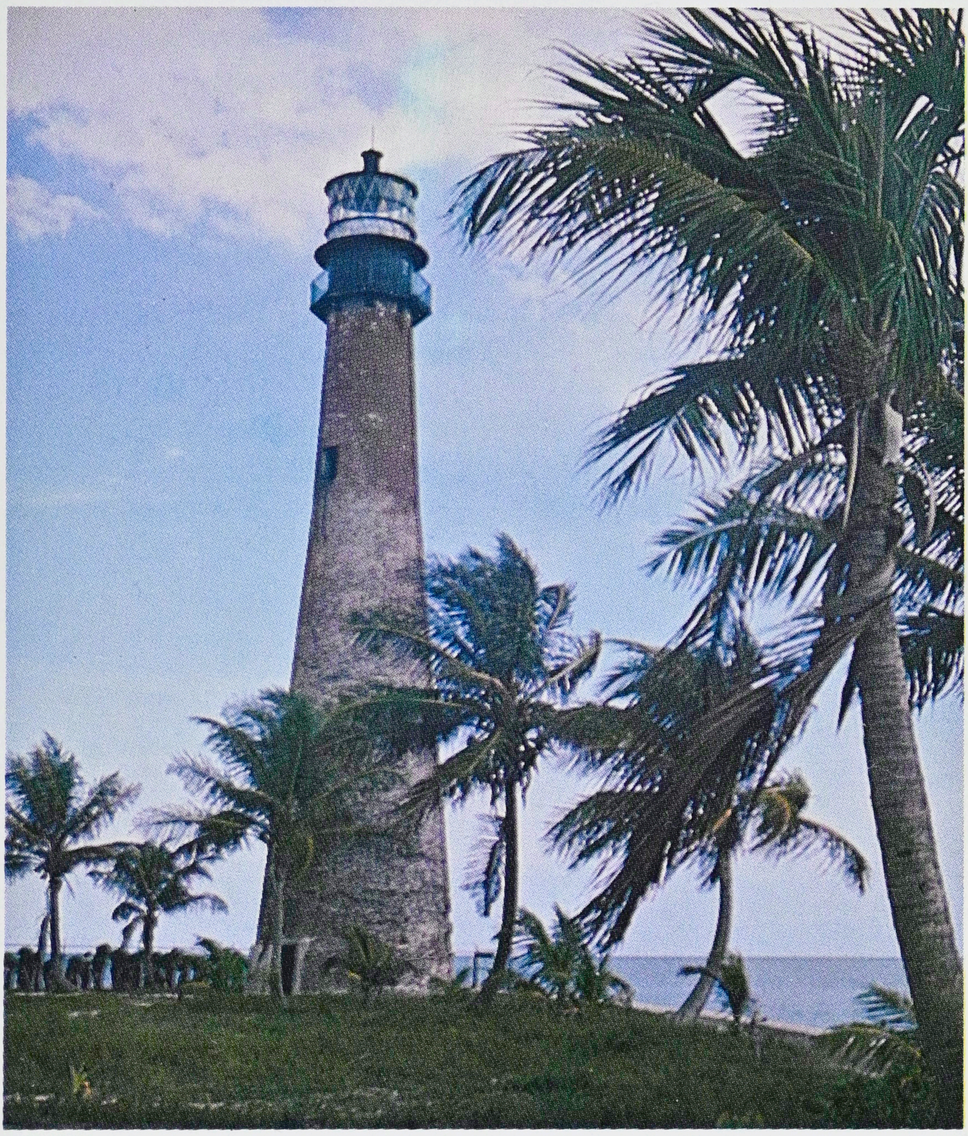
Florida's more than 1,000 miles of sun-bleached and breeze-swept beaches become even more appealing after a visit to a fort or lighthouse that once protected or illuminated them.

The state's Latin culture flourishes in areas such as Tampa's Ybor City section or the Calle Ocho (Eighth Street) district in the heart of Miami. Its Spanish heritage is preserved in the restoration area of St. Augustine and in many place names.

And, throughout Florida, popular attractions have dressed up their daily performances with red, white and blue.

No matter where you go in the Sunshine State this year you will find a reminder of the past depicting the variety and richness of Florida's unique heritage.

Come and celebrate the nation's 200th birthday in Florida. It may be the biggest thing under the sun.



on the Bicentennial

For the nation's 200th birthday, Florida has developed a trail of historical sites winding through the state that celebrated its Bicentennial more than a bicentennial ago.

From Pensacola to Key West, the trail offers a first-hand look at more than 400 years of history in the first colony in the continental United States.

Trail sites located in and around some of Florida's more popular vacation areas allow each visitor to explore some of the pathways to the past in the nation's number one vacation state.

French and Spanish interest in Northeast Florida led to the founding of the first permanent European settlement at St. Augustine in 1565.

Today visitors can tour the massive Castillo de San Marcos (6), which played a strategic role in the defense of the early settlement. For the Bicentennial, the British have come to the fort. Park rangers dressed as soldiers of the 60th Regiment of Foot give musket firing demonstrations and provide historical information about the Castillo during the Revolutionary War.

St. Augustine (5) itself claims the oldest house in the nation. Visitors can walk the cobblestone streets or ride a fringe-topped surrey through the charming restoration city.

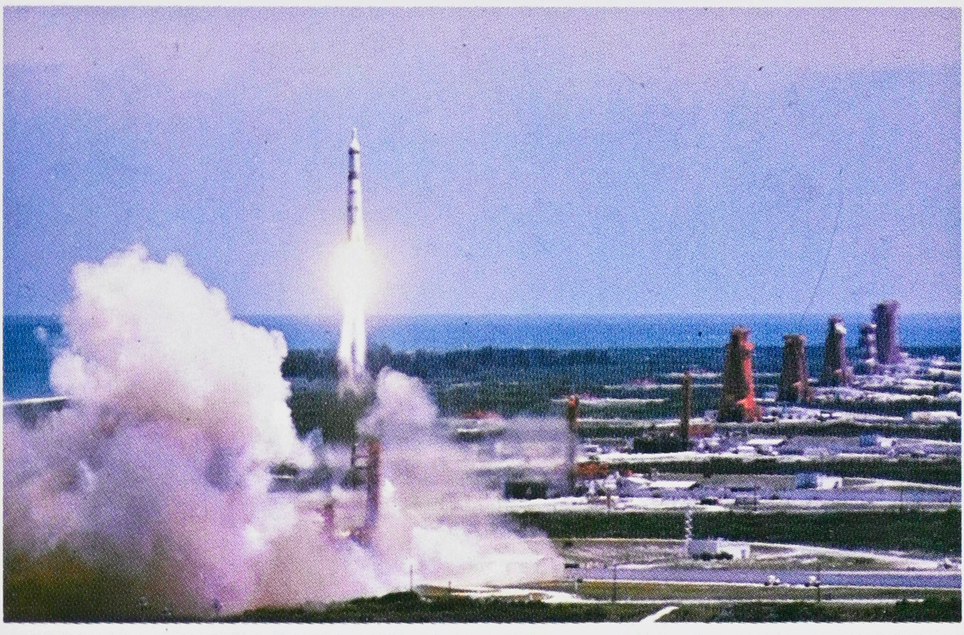
Just north of Jacksonville is historic Fernandina Beach (23) on Amelia Island, part of the Georgia barrier group. Fernandina's restoration centers on its quaint railroad

depot, one of the first built during early railroad development in Florida.

Nearby Fort Clinch (28), now a silent outpost along the Atlantic, was a key site in the 19th century coastal defense of the territory. The fort's ramparts, tunnels, storehouses and barracks are as intriguing today as in the 1850s.

On the banks of the Suwannee River in North Central Florida, the Stephen Foster Center (25) stands as a tribute to the composer who penned Florida's state song, and as a quiet retreat for those who stroll the grounds.

A key site on Florida's east coast is the jut of land known as Cape Canaveral. The Kennedy Space Center (51), at the opposite end of the historical spectrum from St. Augustine, welcomes its visitors with guided tours through the center and the launch complex. Here, the excitement of space exploration is within everyone's reach.



During the Bicentennial year, Florida's Tropical Coast means more than golden sands and glittering nightlife.

Near Stuart, Gilbert's Bar House of Refuge (31) is the lone reminder of 10 such structures built to provide food and shelter for shipwreck victims in the 19th century. Today the refuge houses a nautical museum and the surrounding beach area is a protected nesting preserve for the giant sea turtle.

Visitors to the wealthy resort and residential city of Palm Beach can tour Whitehall (36), the palatial home of millionaire railroad tycoon Henry Morrison Flagler. The mansion, built in 1901 at a cost of $4 million, contains art objects and period furniture.

Villa Vizcaya (38), the magnificent Italian palazzo of yet another millionaire, James Deering of International Harvester fame, also houses a museum of decorative arts. Beautifully landscaped formal gardens surround the estate bordering Biscayne Bay.

Although the Cape Florida Lighthouse (16) no longer illuminates the southeastern coast to warn mariners of the rough coastline, the trail site does shed some light on Florida's exciting seafaring past.

Northwest of Miami, the Okalee Indian Village (45) is home to many of Florida's Seminoles, a few still living much the same way they did 100 years ago.

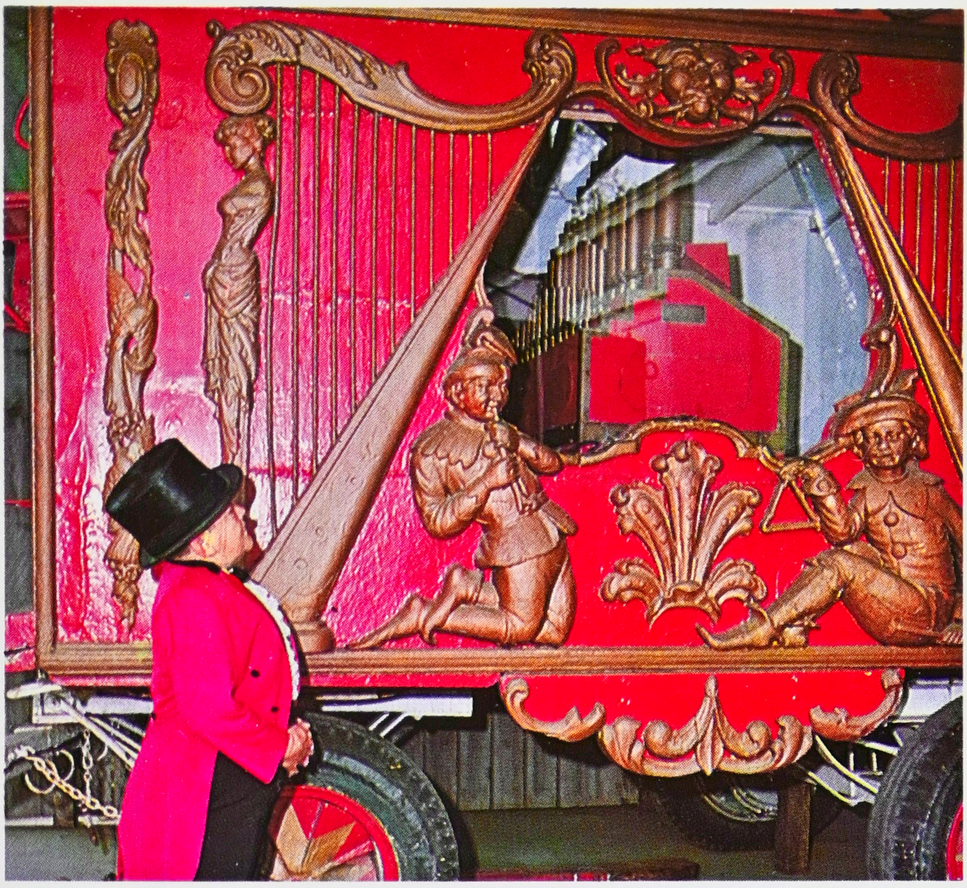
A side trip to Everglades National Park (49), southwest of Greater Miami, provides a rare opportunity to view the wildlife in a small portion of the vast watery wilderness encompassing much of South Florida. Visitors can opt for guided tours through the three Everglades Conservation Areas within the park.

All of historic Key West (15) is an intriguing Bicentennial Trail site. This southernmost city in the continental United States once boasted such famous residents as Ernest Hemingway and John J. Audubon. The residences of both are now open to the public. Visitors also can relive a little of Florida's 19th century maritime history with a tour of the Martello Museum and East Martello Tower (27).

Along Florida's southwestern coast, the Bicentennial Trail leads to Thomas Edison's estate (40) in Fort Myers. The inventor's home, laboratory and botanical gardens are just as he left them.

Vacationers on the mid-Gulf coast beaches can absorb history as well as sunshine.

In Sarasota, the Ringling Museum of the Circus (47) is a tribute to John Ringling and his "Greatest Show on Earth."



The city of Tampa claims several Bicentennial Trail sites.

The Byzantine architecture of the rambling Tampa Bay Hotel (34), now part of the University of Tampa, is a reminder of the days when Henry Plant pushed his railroad along Florida's west coast, creating interest in the area as a vacation destination.

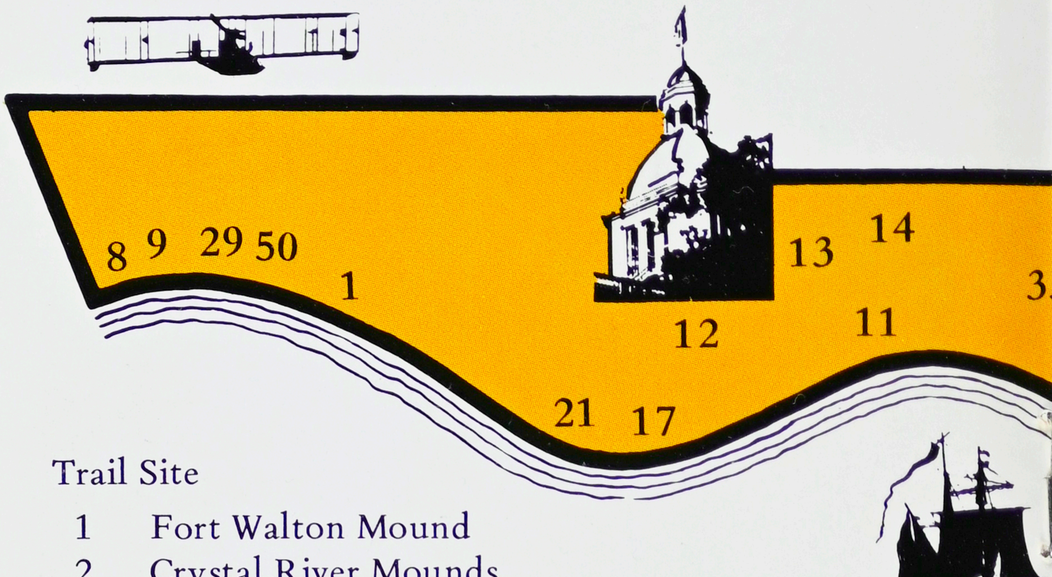
In the historic Ybor City (42) section of Tampa, visitors get a feel for Florida's Spanish/Cuban heritage. Streets lined with Spanish-style architecture, restaurants serving Cuban specialties and shops where cigars still are rolled by hand lend ethnic flavor to the modern, industrial port.

Sites in and around Florida's scenic capital at Tallahassee include the Brokaw-McDougall House (14), situated on land given to the Marquis de Lafayette for his assistance in the Revolutionary War, and the silver-domed Capitol (13), where the business of running the country's ninth most populous state goes on.

Situated on the Alabama border is Pensacola (8), founded before St. Augustine but later rebuilt on another site. Activities in the city's restoration area, Seville Square, center on self-guided tours of historical homes, buildings and churches. Key site is the Hispanic-American Museum, which depicts the Spanish and British colonial periods in West Florida.

Nearby are the ruins of Fort George (9) and Fort Pickens (29), where Indian renegade Geronimo was once held prisoner, and the museum at the Pensacola Naval Air Station (50), birthplace of the U.S. naval aviation program.

Florida's Bicentenn



Trail Site

1 Fort Walton Mound
2 Crystal River Mounds
3 Desoto Memorial
4 Fort Caroline
5 Historic St. Augustine
6 Castillo de San Marcos
7 Spanish Treasure Salvage Site
8 Historic Pensacola
9 Fort George
10 Kingsley Plantation
11 Fort San Marcos de Apalache
12 Fort Gadsden
13 Tallahassee Seat of Government
14 Historic Tallahassee
15 Historic Key West
16 Cape Florida Lighthouse
17 Apalachicola
18 Dade Battlefield
19 Bulow Plantation Ruins
20 Fort Foster
21 Constitution Convention Site
22 Cedar Key
23 Historic Fernandina
24 Gamble Mansion
25 Stephen Foster Center
26 Land Grant College
27 East Martello Tower
28 Fort Clinch
29 Fort Pickens
30 Olustee Battlefield
31 Gilbert's Bar House of Refuge
32 Lake Kissimmee Cow Camp
33 Forest Capital Museum
34 Tampa Bay Hotel
35 Longwood Complex
36 Whitehall
37 Mary Bethune H
38 Vizcaya
39 Koreshan Unity
40 Edison Estate
41 Florida Pioneer
42 Historic Ybor C
43 Tarpon Springs
44 Everglades Recl
45 Okalee Indian V
46 St. Petersburg
47 Ringling Museu
48 Highlands Hami
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50 Naval Aviation
51 Kennedy Space
52 Joseph E. Lee M

*INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE FLORIDA BICENTEN

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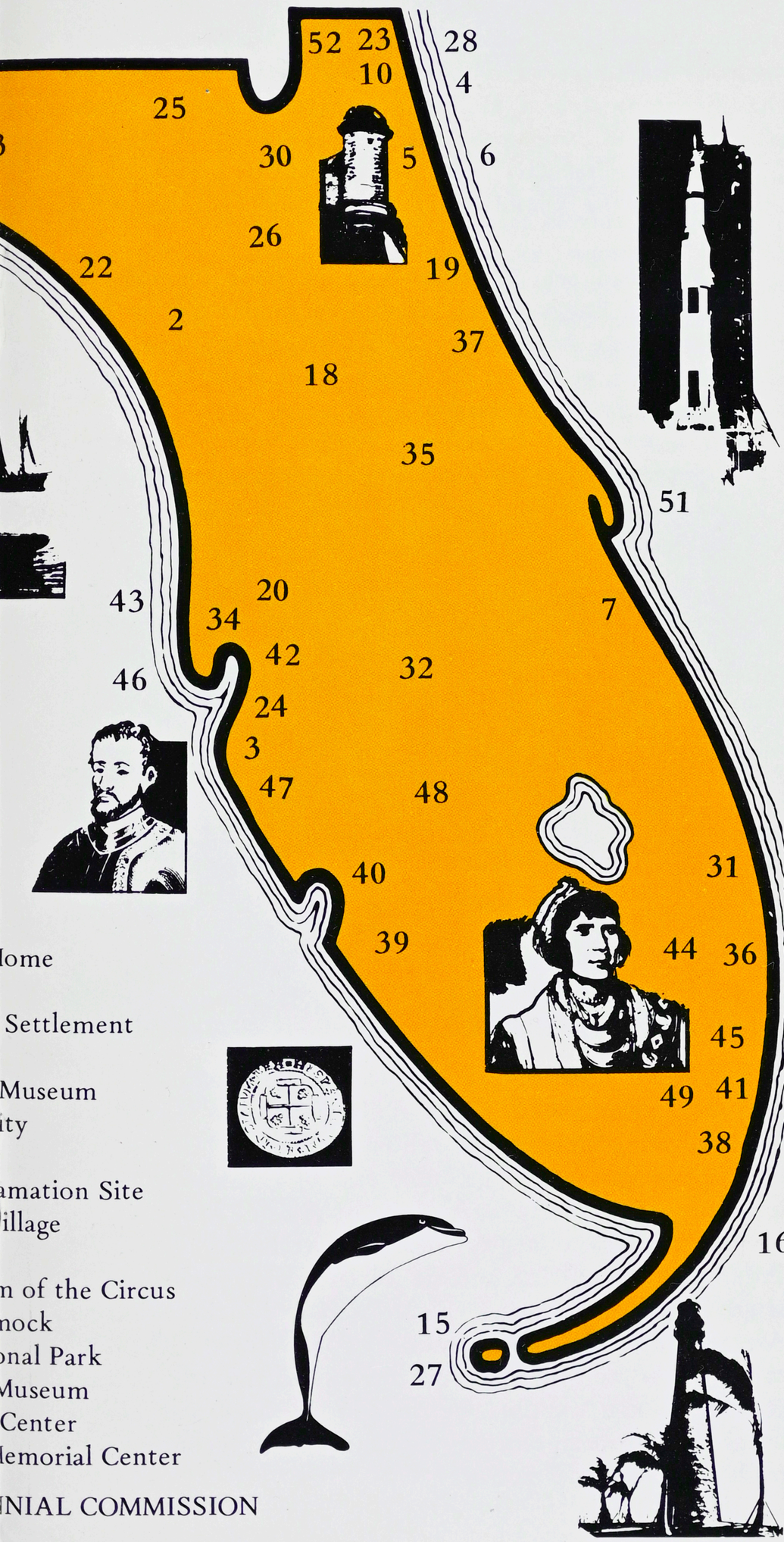

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Projects

Florida is bursting with Bicentennial projects and festivities to entertain and educate its visitors. Events and activities are slated throughout 1976, in every section of the state.

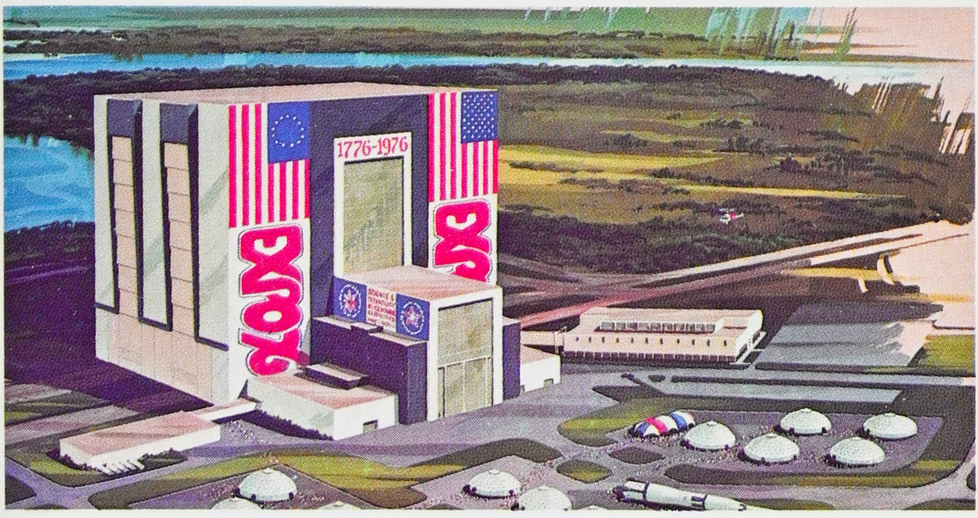
In Miami, a unique educational museum called Planet Ocean has been constructed on Biscayne Bay. It depicts the nature of the sea and its importance to man, through a series of exciting audio-visual exhibits. Miami will celebrate the Bicentennial in a $1.3-million extravaganza of music, pageantry and costumes called "America - A Musical Cavalcade Spectacular." The pageant will be presented for 20 nights at the Miami Beach Convention Hall, beginning July 4, 1976.

Visitors can see St. Petersburg in style through the "Bicentennial Buggy Tours." Volunteer guides will conduct these 90-minute riding tours of St. Petersburg's downtown historical sites, including the Vinoy Hotel, waterfront parks and vistas and Bayboro Harbor.

Just north of St. Petersburg, Tarpon Springs presents a nightly pageant of drama and music depicting the history of the nation, the community's Greek heritage and its historical significance as a sponge diving colony.

Orlando residents are restoring two historic sites: downtown, the Church Street Railroad Station (1880) will house rotating Bicentennial exhibits and travel information; Fort Christmas, originally built east of Orlando in 1837, will be restored on the original site by April, 1976.

Kennedy Space Center, near Merritt Island and Cocoa Beach, is the site of a large Bicentennial exposition of science and technology administered by the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). Scheduled to open in mid-June 1976, the exposition will include geodesic dome exhibits by federal agencies and private industry displaying future applications of technology to problems facing the nation.



Farther north, St. Augustine, the oldest city in the continental United States, is celebrating the Bicentennial with dozens of projects and activities. Residents are dressed in period costumes, including the East Florida Rangers Fife and Drum Corps, which performs regularly in the downtown restoration area. The official state play, "Cross and Sword," is an adventure-filled account of Pedro Menendez de Aviles, the explorer who fought to build a permanent settlement at St. Augustine. The outdoor drama runs throughout the summer, nightly except Sundays.

Jacksonville Beach's contribution to the Bicentennial is a colorful Flag Pavilion displaying the flags of each state and honoring each period in the nation's history.

Some of Florida's richest history is in Pensacola, where Andrew Jackson brought West Florida into the Union as a territory in 1821. On a hillside near Lee Square is Fort George, where Spanish Governor Bernardo de Galvez of Louisiana defeated the British and gained control of West Florida in 1781 -- one of a series of events that led to the Cornwallis surrender at Yorktown. At St. Michael's Cemetery, founded in 1781, Pensacola's varied history and rich ethnic heritage can be traced through family names in the historic burial ground, as well as in colorful street names in the older portions of the waterfront city.

In addition, historic homes, courthouses and theaters are being restored in nearly every part of Florida. No matter where you vacation in Florida, you'll be sure to find the Bicentennial helping the state's history come alive.

Added Attractions

From Mickey Mouse waving a flag down Main Street U.S.A. to red, white and blue water skiers skimming over Lake Eloise, Florida is a pageant of star-spangled Bicentennial shows at many of the state's attractions.

WALT DISNEY WORLD–"America On Parade"--The history of the United states depicted through floats and a variety of whimsical characters.

CYPRESS GARDENS--"Bicentennial Calendar of Events"--Year-long ski shows saluting the 50 states, national holidays and outstanding historical figures. A special daily show depicts the "Shots Heard 'Round the World" at Lexington and Concord in 1775.

THE MIAMI SEAQUARIUM--"The Splash Heard 'Round the World"--Bicentennial skits in the aquatic show areas; a variety of flags and Bicentennial displays.

BUSCH GARDENS--"The Eagle Within"--Multimedia sight and sound tributes to U.S. excellence in science, industry, athletics, arts and crafts.

SEA WORLD--"Yankee Doodle Whale"--Shamu the killer whale saluting America's fight for independence in a historical satire of Revolutionary events.

Also beginning this year are several Bicentennial events incorporated into popular, long-established festivals, such as "Music 365," part of a year-round program of the Festival of States in St. Petersburg.

Calendar of Events

Jan. 3 - Feb. 1 - AT HOME/1776 TO 1976, St. Petersburg. An exhibition of home furnishings with tableaux representing styles from 1776 to the present.

Jan. 31 - "THE LIBERTY BELL" MUSICAL PRODUCTION, Miami Beach. A patriotic musical performed live at the Miami Beach Convention Hall.

Feb. 13-15 - 13th COCONUT GROVE ARTS FESTIVAL, Coconut Grove, Miami. A Bicentennial sidewalk art show featuring artists and craft people from all over the world.

Feb. 19 - Sept. 5 - ASOLO-'76 PLAYS, Sarasota. Nine great American plays - including three world premieres - presented at the Ringling Museums' court theater.

Feb. 20-22 - BICENTENNIAL FOLK FAIR, St. Petersburg. Highlights of ethnic contributions to the nation's culture and traditions.

Feb. 21 - 74th ANNUAL GEORGE WASHINGTON CELEBRATION, Eustis. A community salute to the Father of Our Country featuring arts and crafts displays, street dancing, fireworks, a parade and townsfolk in costume.

Feb. 21 - "AMERICAN WOMAN - ON THE GO FROM 1776-1976", Miami. A live performance featuring women modeling authentic period dress with narrative facts about American women, their customs, home life and progress throughout history.

Feb. 24 - March 6 - CENTRAL FLORIDA FAIR, Orlando. Featuring the Florida Bicentennial Traveling exhibit, the Polk County Medicine Show, national exhibits and environmental and cultural programs at Exposition Park.

Feb. 27 - March 14 - TARPON SPRINGS CENTENNIAL PAGEANT, Tarpon Springs. "Happy Birthday USA and True Tales of Tarpon Springs," a live performance with a mixture of Tarpon Springs history and American history.

March 7-13 - LEHIGH ACRES SPRING BICENTENNIAL FESTIVAL, Lehigh Acres. A parade, festival, live performances and American Heritage exhibits.

March 11-13 - LAKE WORTH SPRING BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, Lake Worth. American heritage emphasized in a festival of square dances, barbecues, horsehoe tournaments, thieves market, Early American exhibits and arts and crafts show.

March 14-20 - HIGHLANDS COUNTY BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION WEEK, Sebring. Coinciding with the annual Sebring 12-hour endurance auto race, and featuring an air show, historical pageant, style show, golf tournaments, Bicentennial Ball and Automobile Hall of Fame Parade.

March 18-28 - 26th ANNUAL DADE COUNTY YOUTH FAIR, Miami. Featuring colonial day, nostalgia day, exhibits, flag display and a science fair.

March 21-28 - DESOTO CELEBRATION, Bradenton. A week-long celebration including the reenactment of the landing of Hernando DeSoto at the mouth of the Manatee River in 1539.

April 8-9 - PROFILE '76 BY EASTMAN KODAK, Pensacola. A film depicting 10,000 miles of people, places and ideas for the Bicentennial.

April 22-25 - BICENTENNIAL YOUTH FAIR, St. Petersburg. A showcase of youth creativity with live performances, displays and exhibits at Bayfront Center.

April 30 - May 1 - MINSTREL SHOW, Miami. A musical history of the United States, at the Dade County Auditorium.

May 1 - BICENTENNIAL FESTIVAL, Casselberry. A parade, old-fashioned fair and festivities with Bicentennial flavor.

May 1-9 - DIMENSIONS '76 - A REGIONAL FINE ARTS FESTIVAL, Orlando. A festival featuring films, dramatic productions, ballet, folk dancing, young artists' recitals, symphonies, choruses, craft exhibits and demonstrations.

May 1-9 - FLORIDA WEEK, Winter Park. A look at Florida's role in American history, including the Old Florida Folk Show, May 1; House Tour and Landmarks Trail, May 4; Stephen Foster Commemorative Musical Program, May 5; Business and Industry Days, May 6-7; Old Medicine Show, May 8; and an exposition of arts and crafts, artifacts, photographs, plus a Seminole Village Trade Show.

May 2-14 - AMERICAN WIND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BICENTENNIAL ODYSSEY 1976. A Floating Center for the Arts bringing free performances of today's finest music and art to the following locations: Pensacola, May 2; Panama City, May 4; Clearwater, May 6; Tampa, May 7; Fort Myers, May 9; Boca Raton, May 12; West Palm Beach, May 14.

June 1-30 - FIESTA OF FIVE FLAGS, Pensacola. A commemoration of the city's turbulent history under the flags of five nations.

June 25 - Sept. 5 - CROSS AND SWORD, St. Augustine. An outdoor drama depicting the founding of St. Augustine by Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565.

June 28 - July 4 - INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION, Milton. A '76 Pageant and Bicentennial parade July 2 and a week of festivities including a train ride with narrative of the local history.

July 4 - SPECIAL BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED IN NEARLY EVERY CITY IN FLORIDA. CONTACT THE LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR DETAILED INFORMATION, OR

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, 402 COLLINS BUILDING, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304 FOR A STATEWIDE LISTING.

July 4-24 - "AMERICA"– A MUSICAL CAVALCADE SPECTACULAR, Miami Beach. A three-dimensional musical- historical dramatization of America, at the Convention Hall.

July 8-18 - '1776'-A PLAY PRODUCTION, Miami. A musical production, based on the book by Peter Stone, at the Gusman Philharmonic Hall.

July 16-20 - MOONWALK WEEK, Cocoa Beach. Week-long festivities including an open house at Patrick Air Force Base, July 18, featuring the "Thunderbirds."

July 31 - Aug. 8 - SEA '76, Miami. A marine event featuring ships from some 10 nations as well as craft from the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard; ship visits and an Aug. 1 Sea Parade.

Aug. 7 - REENACTMENT OF PERRINE MASSACRE, Islamorada. The anniversary of the Aug. 7, 1840, Indian attack on settlers in the Florida Keys, reenacted by costumed performers.

Aug. 11-14 - DAYS IN SPAIN FIESTA, St. Augustine. The Nation's Oldest City celebrates its 411th birthday with a fiesta in the restoration area.

Sept. 8 - OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY, St. Augustine. Reenactment of the landing of Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles, founder of St. Augustine in 1565.

This publication is made possible through the joint efforts of the Bicentennial Commission of Florida and the Division of Tourism, Florida Department of Commerce.

For detailed information on activities in any Florida community, contact the local Chamber of Commerce.

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Division of Tourism
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Tallahassee, Florida 32304